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Maine Aeronautics Commission

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REPORT OF MAINE AERONAUTICS COMMISSION, TO GOVERNOR SUMNER SEWALL

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[June 30, 1944]

Creation, Duties and Income of Maine Aeronautics Commission

Maine Aeronautics Commission was created by act of Legislature in 1941. The duties of the Commission as therein set out were as follows:

"The Commission shall advance the interests of aeronautics within the state by studying aviation needs, assisting and advising authorized representatives of political subdivisions within the state in the development of aeronautics and by cooperating and co-ordinating with such other agencies, whether local, state, regional or federal, as may be working toward the development of aeronautics within the state."

This act was amended by Legislature in 1943, Chapter 316, at which time the state levied a tax on gasoline used by aircrafts within the state, and the Commission was authorized therein as follows:

"The aeronautics commission is hereby authorized and directed to expend so much of the aeronautical fund for the purposes of carrying out the duties imposed upon it by law, as may be necessary and to expend any unexpended balance in such fund to assist in the maintenance of, and the removal of snow from, municipal, state, and federal airports in the state of Maine in such manner and with such amounts as it shall deem equitable. The amounts in said fund are hereby appropriated for the purposes set forth herein."

The following is a schedule of revenue collected under these measures:

1941

Received from-		
Pilots' licenses issued	\$	556.00
Aircraft " "		244.00
Total Receipts, 1941	\$	800.00

1942

Received from-		
Pilots' licenses issued	\$	401.00
Aircraft " "		203.00
Gasoline Tax (first year)		25,799.66
Total receipts, 1942	\$	27,403.66

1943

Received from-		
Pilots' licenses issued	\$	94.00
Aircraft " "		58.00
Gasoline tax		9,987.68
Receipts to June 30, (1st 6 mos.) 1943	\$	10,139.68

Preliminary Statement

At the outset of this war there were less than fifty thousand licensed airplanes, including both military and civilian owned, in the United States.

Today the production lines of our factories are turning out all classes and types of planes at a breath-taking speed.

Temporarily, the aviation industry is far and away the largest industry in our country. From a total volume of \$200,000,000 in 1939, aviation production jumped to six billion four hundred million in 1942 and for the year 1943 our schedule called for the huge sum of ten billion one hundred million. This was five times automobile production at its peak; one-fourth of our war time budget for the year of 1943; almost a seventh of the estimated national income. Upon present estimations, the tonnage production of 1944 will top that of 1943 by more than half.

Two and one-half million men and women of various skills are at work in our aviation plants and now dependent upon them for a livelihood. It is predicted that soon there will be three million men in the air forces of the army and navy. Of this number three hundred thousand will be trained pilots, and the remainder will be skilled as navigators, mechanics, radiomen, meteorologists, dispatchers, airport and maintenance engineers.

Hundreds of thousands of these trained men will desire to follow aviation as a vocation, provided facilities are available.

This commission predicts that in 1950 there will be more than half a million private, commercial and military planes operating in the United States; and that there will be at least three hundred thousand privately owned planes in the United States within three years after the war is over.

Today the State of Maine has twenty-nine airports, 24 of which have hard surfaced runways, and the remaining five are landing fields adequate for small planes. But, if we are to be forehanded; if we as a state, as communities, and as individuals, are to take full advantage of the opportunities which lie ahead, municipalities should supplement our present airport facilities with many inexpensive landing strips or fields and with seaplane bases on our lakes and coast, to make accessible the smaller communities to the trunk, charter and feeder lines, and for the thousands who will be flying their own planes.

Seaplane Base

The twenty five hundred lakes in Maine and the three thousand miles of seacoast insure the importance of seaplane travel to this state, and your commission will recommend to the municipalities bordering on or which are near either coastal or inland waters that they establish bases for planes. In many instances, wharfs or landing

floats already exist which can be used without additional expense to the municipality.

Ice landing strips may be used on inland waters during the winter months, located at or near seaplane bases thereby using many of their facilities in winter as well as summer.

Once established their location should be properly advertised through local chambers of commerce and on all aerial maps.

Airport Control

The State controls but one airport in the state--Augusta State Airport. The Federal Government presently has ownership or control of eight, and the remaining twenty airports are controlled by the communities wherein the same are located.

Commission recommends Leasing Airports to Private Operators

It is the considered judgment of your Commission that the facilities of every airport in the State of Maine would best serve the interests of our state, its citizens, and the municipalities wherein the same are located, by being leased to a private operator, or operators, whichever will best serve the interest of that municipality.

Every municipality which controls airport facilities should lease those facilities ^{with exceptions of runways} to a responsible operator or operators who, with a good surety bond, should be required to guarantee at least the following facilities and services to that community:

- a. A licensed charter plane with a capacity for at least three passengers and pilot, available for public charter at reasonable rates.
- b. A licensed pilot.
- c. A licensed airplane and engine mechanic or mechanics.

These municipalities which control an airport should be extremely cautious in leasing these facilities and make doubly sure that any lease is so conditioned that its citizens will be guaranteed a real and continuing service. This is extremely important, and your Commission has twice called this to the attention of the municipal officers of cities and towns wherein airports are located, and will continue to issue its words of caution.

Provided the airports controlled by our municipalities are thus leased to a responsible operator or operators, they should:

- (a) immediately offer service to other airports,
- (b) have available competent repair service,
- (c) offer stimulating competition in the industry.

If this method of leasing airports is followed by several municipalities, a complete charter service to and from our main air lines will be in operation in and throughout our state soon after the cessation of hostilities. It cannot be expected that complete feeder scheduled services will be in operation to and from all municipalities for several years to come; but by this method of leasing, facilities will be immediately available to fill in, until scheduled feeder services are established.

Anticipated Post-War Operation

Your Commission is of the opinion that there will be at least seven types of aerial activities throughout our state after the cessation of hostilities, which are:

1. International, which will be practically non-stop flights using much larger and faster planes than were used in 1941.
2. Trunk line passenger and mail service stopping at our larger metropolitan areas.
3. The inauguration of cargo service also stopping at our larger metropolitan areas.
4. Scheduled feeder lines carrying passengers and cargo, and mail.
5. Charter service by local operators using two to five-passenger planes.
6. Civilian flying using the low-operating-cost type planes.
7. Maintenance and repair.

Post-War Planning

Your Commission has for some considerable time, and is now, actually engaged in post-war planning. It is preparing maps, data and other information which, upon the cessation of hostilities, will be made available to all private flyers, airplane lines, operators and manufacturers, and will be of great value to pilots and of interest and aid to air tourists.

In addition to these activities, your Commission is causing to be developed a model airport administration building typical of Maine in construction, reasonable in cost, and so surrounded and landscaped that its setting as viewed from the air will be a replica of the map of our state; and your Commission, following out your suggestion, recommends that within this area there be installed such recreational facilities as the communities can afford or the need seems to indicate; that within the administration building there be provided good restaurant facilities at reasonable prices, so that each airport in our state may ultimately become its focal point.

It is hoped that all airport communities will cooperate with the commission in this plan, so that we may have a unified type administration building and surroundings throughout.

Snow Removal

Our state being subject to varying snow conditions, your Commission has given considerable time and study looking to the development of means and methods of prompt snow removal from our airports, so that scheduled services may operate with as little interruption as possible. It is the opinion of the Commission that each community controlling an airport should early contract with competent parties who own or control good $1\frac{1}{2}$ -5 ton truck type snow plow equipment to remove all snow from the runways and safety strips during the winter season to the full capacity of that equipment.

Those who contract with the communities to thus remove the snow should be required to furnish the community with a good and sufficient surety bond for the prompt and faithful performance of such contracts.

Plowing with this equipment should in all instances be started as soon as the storm starts and continued without interruption until the port is cleared.

There will be seasons and localities where this conventional truck type plow equipment will not be adequate and in such instances additional equipment of a different type will be necessary.

The so-called "Snow Go" is an equipment now manufactured which can be attached to a heavy four wheel drive truck and is capable of removing high banks of snow by cutting and blowing it about 150 feet distant. The equipment costs about \$18,000 per unit. Each municipality controlling an airport could not be expected to purchase, maintain and operate such an expensive unit. This unit travels about one mile per hour when removing heavy embankments. On the highway in transit from one part to another they are capable of a speed of approximately twenty-five miles per hour.

Your Commission is of the opinion that four such units should be purchased by this commission to service the parts of the state as follows:

1. Portland area
2. Augusta "
3. Bangor "
4. Houlton "

In extreme winters when the conventional equipment proves inadequate, these machines should be pressed into service, but only to

supplement and never to supplant the conventional truck type plow.

The following communities have received funds from the Maine Aeronautics Commission to aid in snow removal as follows:

1943

Portland	\$1,000.
Bar Harbor	1,000.
Millinocket	300.
Pittsfield	1,500.
Waterville	1,500.
Minot	500.
State Airport	1,500.

1944

Portland	\$1,000.
Millinocket	300.
Minot	500.
Waterville	1,500.
Dover-Foxcroft	500.
State Airport	1,500.
Pittsfield	1,500.
Rockwood	500.

Financial Aid to Communities

The commission hopes and expects to receive sufficient funds from the gas tax not only to entirely relieve the municipalities from the expense of snow removal and runway maintenance, but in addition thereto hopes to be able to recommend a reduction in gas tax after civilian flying is resumed.

Respectfully submitted,

MAINE AERONAUTICS COMMISSION
By
